CHAPTER 1

I.   SUMMARY OF STATEWIDE FINDINGS RELATED TO LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY - 2003

Progress is noted from 2002 to 2003 in a number of dimensions of capacity to provide essential public health services. More local public health agencies are open for business a full 40 hour week, and more agencies now have a system to assure that staff can be contacted at all times if emergencies occur or communicable diseases need to be reported. Agencies are now more likely to use the MOHSIS system to report and track infectious diseases, making it easier for public health authorities everywhere to be aware of disease outbreaks. More agencies report billing for services they provide, perhaps substituting such income for revenue losses from public sources. Further progress in public health capacity is expected because an increased number of agencies report that quality improvement methods are being implemented across all programs.

Availability: 15% of local public health agencies in Missouri reported they are open for business at their main facility less than 40 hours a week during 2003 compared to 20% in 2002. Most agencies (67%) serve the public between 40 and 44 hours each week, and 19% are open 45 hours or more each week. (See Graph 1.1 and Data Table 1.1)

Satellite Locations: 27% of agencies report having branch locations, down from 45% in 2002. Of the 31 agencies with branch offices, most (71%) have only 1 site. The remaining agencies have from 2 to 6 separate branch locations. (See Graph 1.2.1 and Data Tables 1.2 & 1.2.1)

Emergency Contact: 100% of agencies (up from 91% in June 2002) have a system to receive notification and respond to emergencies at all times of the day or night. Cell phones are relied upon by 89% of agencies for after-hours communication. Fifty-five percent (55%) use pagers, and 61% are contacted by their 911 center. (See Graph 1.3.1 and Data Table 1.3.1)

Public Health Business Off Site: half (50%) of agencies report that from 25% to 49% of their business is conducted outside of their facility. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of agencies report that 50% or more of public health business is conducted off site. (See Graph 1.4 and Data Table 1.4)

Billing for Services: 96% of agencies bill Medicaid for services, 82% bill Medicare (up from 75% in June 2002), and 28% bill private insurance companies (up from 25% in June 2002). More agencies (75%) charge their clients for some services than in 2002, when 63% of agencies charged clients. (See Graph 2.1 and Data Table 2.1)

Technology: 88% of agencies report having a computer network; however, all agencies use the MOHSAIC system. Most agencies are connected through MOHSAIC for WIC (91%), Vital Records (98%), and Immunizations (99%). Eighty percent (80%) of agencies reported using MOHSIS for Communicable Disease Reporting and Investigation (up from 67% in 2002). The percentage of local agencies with a web site increased from 36% in 2002 to 41% in 2003. (See Graphs 3.1 thru 3.9 and Data Tables 3.1 thru 3.9)

Quality Improvement: 82% of agencies report having designated staff for planning and implementing quality improvement methods across public health programs (up from 75% in 2002). However, only 23% of agencies rate their capacity to utilize quality improvement principles throughout their organization as "very good" or better. Eighty-seven percent (87%) report that quality improvement and customer service characteristics are incorporated into staff performance expectations (up from 79% in 2002). (See Graphs 4.1 thru 4.3 and Data Tables 4.1 thru 4.3)

Strategic Planning: 88% of agencies report having a strategic plan. Of the 100 agencies that have a strategic plan, 48% report that their plan was updated in 2002 or 2003. Forty percent (40%) have not updated their plan for 3 years or more. (See Graphs 6.1 and 6.1.1 and Data Tables 6.1 and 6.1.1)

Sixty-six percent (66%) of agencies report referring to their strategic plan from one to four times during the year; however, 16% do not ever refer to their plan. Most agencies (97%) had their staff involved in developing or updating their strategic plan, 85% involved their governing body, and 55% involved their community.   Strategic plans are used by 89% of agencies in planning, 60% use the plan for performance management, 79% use it for budget allocation, and 51% use the plan for marketing. (See Graphs 6.1.2 thru 6.1.4 and Data Tables 6.1.2 thru 6.1.4)